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General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission
282nd meeting
Friday, 27 April 2007, 11 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Rosselli ..... (Uruguay)

The meeting was called to order at 11.20 a.m.

Report of the Disarmament Commission to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): We shall begin the final meeting of the 2007 substantive session with agenda item 6, which concerns the adoption of reports of the subsidiary bodies on the various agenda items, as well as the consideration and adoption of the draft report of the Commission, as contained in documents A/CN.10/2007/CRP.2, CRP.3 and CRP.4. These documents have been circulated to delegations.

In accordance with our programme of work, we shall first consider and adopt the Commission's report. We shall thereafter hear any closing statements that delegations may wish to make.

In order to begin the process of considering and adopting the reports of subsidiary bodies as regards the various agenda items, I shall ask the Chairmen of each Working Group to introduce their reports. I now give the floor to the representative of Benin, Mr. Jean-Francis Régis Zinsou, Chairman of Working Group I, to introduce the Group's report contained in document A/CN.10/2007/CRP.3, to which several changes were made during the recent meeting of the Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Zinsou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): Working Group I of the Disarmament Commission met from 11 to 25 April 2007 to consider item 4 of this session's agenda.

The draft report of the Working Group before the Commission covers the overall conduct of our proceedings. It gives references to the documents used by the Working Group and provides an overall assessment of the progress of its deliberations and of the emerging prospects for the final session of the three-year cycle now under way.

With regard to the documents, the Working Group used as a basis for its deliberations the text proposed by its Chair in the context of two meetings of informal preparatory consultations, held on 20 February and 19 March 2007. We then proceeded, from 12 to 18 April, to first and second readings of the document. The point of that exercise was to have a debate about the initial contents of the document and to take note of proposed amendments submitted by delegations, whether as groups of countries or in their national capacity, on the basis of the working papers they had presented, which are referred to in paragraph 3 of the draft report.

In that connection, delegations used, and sometimes abused, their right to propose amendments — to the extent that the document nearly doubled in size by the end of the exercise. Because of that, we are further away from the consensus that was the object of our efforts. That can be ascertained through a reading of the document referred to in paragraph 3 (g) of the draft report. Several delegations clearly distanced themselves from that document and expressed their reservations regarding continuing deliberations on the basis of a text that to them seemed to have become a catalogue of wishful thinking, wishes

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made, in some cases, without any concern about reaching agreement. In particular, several delegations expressed the hope to avert the commencement of a contradictory debate that could jeopardize the prospects for the crucial meetings to be held in the coming weeks in the context of the disarmament and non-proliferation process.

It was in those circumstances that the Working Group asked me, through common accord, to propose, in order to proceed with our deliberations, a brief document focused on several critical points on which constructive and productive negotiations could begin in the cooperative atmosphere that I attempted to establish, which some delegations also wished to maintain.

In that regard, the document I circulated on that basis on 20 April has been issued as document A/CN.10/2007/WG.I/WP.4 and is referred to in paragraph 3 (d) of the draft report. It provides a basis for the final document of the cycle. Initial reactions to it were especially positive, and the amendments proposed during that meeting were not very numerous. Nevertheless, circumstances and considerations that were not relevant to the content of the document prevented thorough consideration of it. That still remains to be done. That is the thrust of paragraph 12 of the draft report of the Working Group.

Document WG.I/WP.4 contains 10 basic principles that I recommend for the careful consideration of Member States and the entire international community as a basis for the formulation of consensus recommendations for the implementation of the objectives of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, as requested of us by the General Assembly.

At this pivotal stage in our deliberations, I wish to urge all Member States, and especially the members of the Working Group, to make good use of the period between the two sessions in order to overcome differences of opinions, whether conceptual or procedural, that may move us further from our shared goal. That goal is indeed the adoption at the end of the cycle of a document that can serve as a new basis for a broad international consensus based on three pillars: nuclear disarmament, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the inalienable right of all States to have access to and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

To that end, we must endeavour to develop a common understanding of the real problems before us, as well as to seek solutions that prioritize the interests of the majority of humankind. I intend to hold informal consultations prior to the next session, in an effort to rally the members of the Working Group around the shared objective that our States have set within the framework of the United Nations.

That said, I would like to thank all the members of the Working Group for their active participation, diligence and determination to make progress. On behalf of the Working Group, I would also like to thank the Department for Disarmament Affairs for its support for our work through the assignment of an especially effective adviser, namely, Mr. Curtis Raynold, and his assistant, Ms. Kristin Jenssen. I would also like to thank the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, which provided us with a secretariat in the person of Mr. Sergei Cherniavsky, who, along with his assistant, Ms. Lidija Komatina, was a most useful adviser in the conduct of meetings and in the area of documentation.

In conclusion, I would like to express my faith in the political will and mutual confidence of Member States, which I ardently desire, to make progress in a cooperative way by adopting an approach based on agreement and pragmatic realism.

It is in that way that, during our last session in 2008, we can in fact put into practice our dedication to international peace and security in strict respect for the recognized rights of all Member States under the United Nations Charter. We shall certainly do so through the adoption of specific and practical recommendations on the best ways to achieve the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons as an integral part of the process of general and complete disarmament.

That is the prerequisite for ensuring that the enormous resources allocated to weapons can ultimately be used to better ends, such as averting all existing dangers and improving the living conditions of the peoples of the United Nations.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): If no delegation wishes to comment on the report of Working Group I, I understand that the Commission is ready to adopt the report, as contained in document A/CN.10/2007/CRP.3.

It was so decided.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): We now turn to the report of Working Group II on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, as contained in document A/CN.10/2007/CRP.4.

I call on the Chairman of Working Group II.

Mr. Duarte (Brazil), Chairman of Working Group II: The report of Working Group II that is before the Commission, as reflected in paragraph 17 on page 8 of document A/CN.10/2007/CRP.2, as amended, is a factual report on the work done by Working Group II during this session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission in discharging its mandate as regards agenda item 5, "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons".

The report shows that the Group decided at its 1st meeting to work on the basis of the Chairman's non-paper, which is contained in document A/CN.10/2007/CRP.1/Rev.3. The report also shows that the Working Group engaged in substantive discussions and consultations on the Chairman's paper, which led to the submission of two further revisions of the paper in documents CRP.1/Rev.4 and CRP.1/Rev.5, and also that document CRP.1/Rev.5 will be considered as a basis for its work at the next session of the Commission.

I would like to comment briefly on the work done by the Working Group at this session, and more specifically on the latest version of the working paper in document A/CN.10/2007/CRP.1/Rev.5.

At its first eight meetings, the Working Group held one full and thorough reading of document CRP.1/Rev.3, which was then revised and issued as document CRP.1/Rev.4. At its last three meetings, the Working Group addressed specific issues, particularly in the first three sections of the document. That led to generally acceptable formulations for various paragraphs, especially in section I, "Introduction", and section II, "Scope". Of the five sections of the document, two — sections II, "Scope", and III, "Principles" — are now free from controversial text.

In section I, "Introduction", there are two paragraphs — paragraph 1 and the new paragraph 11 — on which a great deal of effort was made to arrive at generally acceptable draftings. I believe that the Group came close to clearing those paragraphs as well. There are still some new paragraphs in section I that were proposed at this session. They will need to be discussed in depth if we are to arrive at generally agreeable formulations for them.

Sections IV, "Existing practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons", and V, "The way ahead", are those in which we find the greatest amount of remaining controversial text. I believe that those sections would also benefit from some redrafting and streamlining in order to make the document as a whole more focused and more concise. Consideration could also be given to placing the whole or some parts of section IV in an annex to the document.

The fifth revision of document A/CN.10/2007/CRP.1 reflects the latest state of affairs in the Working Group's discussions. Although progress was achieved at this session in several areas of the document, as I just pointed out, there is no doubt that much remains to be done. Bearing in mind that 2008 will mark the third and final year of the current work cycle of the Disarmament Commission, I encourage delegations to have their capitals reflect on the content of this latest version of the document that has so far served as the basis for work in Working Group II. I hope that, at the beginning of the next session, the Group will be able to carry on its work on the basis of document CRP.1/Rev.5.

Let me point out that, at the stage we are in, the Group will need to make a determined effort in order to reach general agreement on the text at our next session. Achieving that goal will require delegations to concentrate on the elements that are contained in the document and focus on areas in which the text can be further improved. It will also require delegations to propose and be prepared to consider formulas aimed at reaching general agreement. It will also require delegations to make available any new substantive proposals at the beginning of the session so that those proposals can be properly studied and, if necessary, referred back to capitals in time. And, of course, delegations will need to have the necessary flexibility to explore compromise solutions and to display the political will to adopt them.

Finally, I would like to thank all those delegations that contributed constructively to the work of the Group, as well as those persons that assisted me

in conducting the work of the Group at this session: Ms. Kristin Giles of the Disarmament and Decolonization Affairs Branch and Ms. Pamela Maponga and Mr. Hideki Matsuno of the Conventional Arms Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs; and, last but not least, Mr. Jandyr Santos, my colleague at the permanent mission of Brazil to the United Nations.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): As no delegation wishes to comment on the report of Working Group II, contained in document A/CN.10/2007/CRP.4, may I take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the report?

It was so decided.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): Now that all the reports of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission have been adopted, I would like personally to thank the Chairmen of the two Working Groups — Mr. Jean-Francis Régis Zinsou and Mr. Carlos Duarte — as well as Mr. Jandyr Santos for their dedication in guiding the work of the two Groups. The Commission is deeply indebted to them for the way in which they guided the deliberations on two very complex issues.

We will now begin consideration of the draft report of the Disarmament Commission (A/CN.10/2007/CRP.2), which, in its final version, will reflect the changes made to the text of the reports.

I give the floor to the Rapporteur of the Commission, Mr. Bassam Darwish of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Darwish (Syrian Arab Republic), Rapporteur of the Commission: It is my honour and distinct pleasure to introduce to the Disarmament Commission the draft report of the Commission, as contained in document A/CN.10/2007/CRP.2.

The draft report consists of four chapters: introduction; organization and work of the 2007 substantive session; documentation; and conclusions and recommendations.

Before I move on, allow me to turn to the text of the report and to draw the attention of delegations to the following corrections thereto.

The first correction is to paragraph 2 of CRP.4. The word "consensus" should be deleted and replaced by the word "consent". That change applies also to paragraph 2, page 8, second line, of CRP.2.

The second correction relates to paragraph 8 of CRP.3, on page 2. That paragraph should read:

> "At the 9th and 10th meetings of the Working Group, on 23 and 24 April, preliminary discussions took place on specific elements contained in the different papers submitted by the Chairman as well as on other papers submitted by delegations and groups of delegations."

We have thus deleted, in the third line, the words "Chairman's working paper" as well as the bracketed information, and substituted the words "different papers submitted by the Chairman".

The third correction relates to paragraph 12 of CRP.3, on page 2. The first four words of that paragraph — "The Working Group noted" — should be deleted and replaced by the words "It is". That wording will apply also to paragraph 12 of CRP.2, on page 8.

The fourth correction relates to paragraph 9 of CRP.2, on page 5. The words "informal meetings" should be replaced by "two informal consultations".

There is another small correction on page 7 of CRP.2. In the second line from the top, the word "Department" should be deleted and replaced with the word "Office", so as to read "Office for Disarmament Affairs". The Secretariat will make that change automatically wherever necessary.

Those are the main changes and corrections to the report. Would all delegations kindly take note of them? They will, of course, be reflected in the report.

As is customary, the final report is a factual description of the Commission's work and proceedings during the session. The substantive part comprises the two reports of the Working Groups, which were just adopted by the Commission and which are part of this report. This part is a reflection of compromises and agreements reached by delegations through delicate negotiations carried out in a spirit of constructive cooperation.

The Commission discussed two items at this session, and, as usual, no parallel meetings were held.

Thus I was privileged to closely watch both Chairmen and the delegations carefully and painstakingly craft a consensus step by step on complex issues of the modern disarmament agenda. Two reports of the Working Groups, although not perfect or fully

satisfactory to everybody, will serve as a good basis for further discussions.

On agenda item 4, entitled "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons", I can say that it was a welcome occurrence that the dialogue on this urgent issue was vigorously pursued within the framework of the Disarmament Commission, through the continued and appreciated efforts of the Chairman of Working Group I. The Commission, with its deliberative mandate, allows practical and action-oriented considerations as well as conceptual approaches to the issue without being under negotiating pressure. From that viewpoint, all submitted working papers, CRPs and oral and written comments constituted the rich background against which the Group operated. All those documents, which are listed in the report adopted by Working Group I, have been forwarded to the 2008 session of the Disarmament Commission.

On agenda item 5, entitled "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons", the Chairman this year presented the Group with a non-paper, as was the case at the last session. Building on positive elements achieved during previous years, the Chairman professionally, successfully and smoothly took the Group down the path of steady progress that will, hopefully, be continued next year. Here I should not forget to offer deep thanks for the much-appreciated help from our dear colleague Mr. Jandyr Santos, who helped while the Chairman was away in Brazil. The degree of convergence of different positions and approaches to this difficult issue and the flexibility shown by delegations leave us with the hope that an agreement is still possible in the future.

I wish to take this opportunity to say that it has been a great honour to serve as the Rapporteur at this session and, particularly, to work under the able leadership of our Chairman, Mr. Elbio Rosselli. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It was a pleasure and an enriching experience to participate in the work of the Bureau, together with the Vice-Chairmen and Chairmen of the two Working Groups, who provided effective and expert guidance in the deliberations of the subsidiary bodies.

I also wish to thank the Secretary of the Commission, Mr. Timur Alasaniya, and the Secretaries of the Working Groups, whose names are listed in the report. Although I do not mention them one by one, I do thank all of them. I also thank members, consultants and Disarmament Commission staff assisting in the deliberations.

Finally, allow me to extend my sincere appreciation to the members of the Secretariat for their tireless efforts and kind assistance.

With these brief remarks, I recommend that the Commission adopt the draft report as contained in document A/CN.10/2007/CRP.2.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Bassam Darwish the Rapporteur of the Commission, for introducing the draft report of the Disarmament Commission. I now propose that we consider the report chapter by chapter. I propose we take chapters I and II together, having to do with the introduction to the report and the organization and work of the session. Are there any comments?

I understand that the delegations have no comments. We can therefore take as adopted chapters I and II.

It was so agreed.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I propose that we now consider chapter III, on documentation for this session. Are there any comments on this chapter?

No delegation is requesting the floor. I take it that the Commission wishes to adopt chapter III.

It was so agreed.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I now propose that we examine chapter IV, on conclusions and recommendations. Are there any comments on chapter IV?

There are no comments. I take it that chapter IV is adopted.

It was so agreed.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): We have thus adopted the full report of the Disarmament Commission at its substantive session for 2007.

It was so agreed.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to make some very brief remarks. As Chairman, in my introductory statement on the opening day of our

session, I said that the Commission, just like any multilateral body, can only be as good as the collective will of its members. I think that in this session — which has been very special because it is the intermediate year in the three-year cycle — we have taken a small step forward in the work of the Commission. The discussions in the Working Groups were substantive. We are, of course, far from reaching substantial agreements, but delegations clearly participated — on occasion, with, I understand, a lot of enthusiasm — which has generated interesting debates. I believe we still need more substance, more debate and more participation next year.

We were very happy that the Secretary-General came to open this session of the Disarmament Commission. That shows the great interest that the Secretary-General has in this particular item on the United Nations agenda, and we are pleased that he was able to accompany us at this session.

I do not want to extend these remarks any further. The participants here are the true actors of this Commission. To them, I owe my gratitude for their active participation.

Let me turn briefly to follow-up of our work. As members may recall, in my opening statement I spoke about practical ways for the implementation of resolution 61/98. On behalf of the Bureau, I asked for guidance from the Commission on this matter. At a certain point the Chairman was asked to submit a non-paper containing several possible options on participation of experts and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and on possible changes in the structure of deliberations in plenary and Working Group meetings.

With the assistance of Bureau members and based on brief and limited consultations, I distributed a Chairman's non-paper, entitled "Implementation of resolution 61/98 and additional proposals on participation of NGOs". I hope that everybody has received copies. I neither want nor expect members to discuss the issue at this late stage of the Commission's work. The idea was to raise the matter and provide some guidelines so that delegations can consult their capitals and engage in some exchanges of views. If delegations are willing, we can return to this non-paper some time during the summer and have an informal consultation on any measures we might adopt for the implementation of the resolution.

I wish now to speak of a matter of importance in the sphere of disarmament.

This coming Sunday, 29 April 2007, the States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction will mark the tenth anniversary of the Convention's entry into force. This is the first disarmament agreement negotiated within a multilateral framework that provides for the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction under universally applied international control.

To date, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has conducted some 2,800 inspections to ensure the total destruction of stockpiled weapons and to ensure the non-proliferation of chemical weapons and their precursors. I would like to congratulate the States parties to the Convention and the OPCW for their efforts towards building a world free of chemical weapons.

To commemorate this anniversary, Her Majesty Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands will unveil a permanent memorial dedicated to all victims of chemical weapons, in a ceremony to be held at The Hague on 9 May. The memorial will remind the world of the countless people who have been killed or wounded due to the use of chemical weapons throughout history. It will also serve as an important symbol of our shared duty to ensure that future generations will never experience the horror of these weapons.

The Commission will now hear concluding statements by delegations.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): On behalf of my delegation, and as Chair of the Disarmament Commission at last year's session, I would like to express our deep gratitude to you, Mr. Chairman, for having led this year's substantive session of the Commission to a meaningful conclusion. I believe we have made steady progress in all our work, building on last year's groundwork, even though much still remains to be done in order to reach full agreement.

In the face of the immense challenges facing the disarmament and non-proliferation system, it is not easy to navigate among the many divergent interests and positions and achieve consensus on difficult issues. It would have been even better if we could have

achieved more. However, I think the discussions we had and the efforts we made to narrow the gaps among our views have been invaluable in and of themselves.

In addition to your own efforts, Mr. Chairman, we particularly appreciate the hard work of the two Working Group Chairs, Mr. Jean-Francis Régis Zinsou of Benin and Mr. Carlos Duarte of Brazil. My delegation will continue to extend to them our full support and to do our part in striving for a successful conclusion of this three-year cycle of debate. We look forward to working closely with all of our colleagues again next year.

Mr. Ruddyard (Indonesia): First of all, Mr. Chairman, I would like to join the previous speaker in thanking you. We appreciate the way in which you have conducted our meetings. On behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, I congratulate you on the outcome of this session. Our appreciation goes also to the other members of the Bureau for the way in which they helped you conclude the session in an excellent manner.

We wish also to thank the Chairs of Working Group I and Working Group II for their tireless efforts in conducting the Group meetings and in preparing the various working papers. We understand the hard work they faced, and we salute them for their efforts. Furthermore, we acknowledge our colleagues in other delegations for engaging in the Working Group meetings in a spirit of cooperation and for showing flexibility in the discussion of issues that are relevant to us.

Our appreciation goes also to the Secretariat staff for their tremendous efforts in assisting the work of the Commission and for their contribution to the success of the session.

It is our hope that the discussion over the past three weeks can provide a good basis for next year's session; it shows that so far we have made excellent progress. We reaffirm our commitment to continue our constructive and transparent engagement in the next year of this cycle of Disarmament Commission meetings. That is because of the importance we attach to the Commission, in particular in advancing the issue of nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Shamaa (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish, Mr. Chairman, to congratulate you sincerely on your wise leadership of the 2007 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. Through you, we thank the Chairmen of the two Working Groups. Our thanks go also to Mr. Timur Alasaniya, Secretary of the Commission; Mr. Ioan Tudor; Mr. Sergei Cherniavsky, Secretary of Working Group I; Ms. Christa Giles, Secretary of Working Group II; and all other members of the Secretariat staff who assisted us in moving our work forward.

We are confident, Sir, that your efforts this year will help build a constructive consensus leading to the attainment of our ultimate objective: the total elimination of all nuclear weapons, in the service of the cause of peace and security for humankind.

Mr. Vasiliyev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): My delegation would like to join previous speakers in expressing its gratitude to you, Mr. Chairman, the Chairmen of the two Working Groups, the Vice-Chairmen and the secretariat of the Disarmament Commission for their assistance in our productive work.

At the beginning of this session, my delegation expressed its readiness to constructively promote the work of the Commission and of its Working Groups. Today, we see that a number of results have been achieved in that work. At the same time, I wish to note that very important work lies ahead next year and that substantive events might occur before then that could directly affect our work.

In particular, I wish to note that President Putin, in a statement before the Federal Assembly yesterday, raised several issues that directly affect the work of our body. In particular, he raised the issue of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. An unacceptable situation is currently developing in which the Treaty is actually being implemented by only one side. Thus, the logic of the Treaty — which is predicated on ensuring a balance of forces between the two major sources of power that emerged in Europe in the 1990s — has been completely subverted. Therefore, we are now raising the issue of a moratorium on the Treaty. We hope that our Treaty partners will reach the necessary conclusions so that next year we will not be discussing leaving the Treaty.

Unfortunately, a similar situation is now developing with respect to another important strategic agreement: the system for anti-ballistic-missile defense. The decision to employ an ABM system could lead to a situation in which strategic armed forces

could emerge on the European continent for the first time since the cold war era. Of course, that would affect the prospects for, inter alia, nuclear disarmament.

In his statement, referring to the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention, President Putin noted that on 9 May Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands will be unveiling a monument to the victims of chemical weapons. The ninth of May is an extremely significant date for Europe, for on that day the Second World War ended in Europe. We can only welcome the fact that a country will be unveiling a memorial in connection with that date. Unfortunately, in other European countries — here, I am thinking of Estonia — such monuments are being destroyed. A genuine war on monuments has been declared — a war that, as we can already see from media reports, has claimed victims.

As my delegation would like our work to conclude on a positive note, we express the hope that all of these negative elements will be eliminated so that we can all continue our work next year in a constructive and effective manner.

Mr. Brasack (Germany): I am taking the floor on behalf of the European Union (EU). On behalf of the EU, I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the able leadership that you have provided during this year's session of the Disarmament Commission, and particularly during today's meeting. Both during the initial plenary meetings and in the Bureau, you have provided the guidance necessary to lead the Commission to a result, without restricting the liberty of action of the Working Groups or their Chairs.

In particular, through you, Mr. Chairman, I would like to commend the Chairmen of the two Working Groups. They were faced with complex and difficult issues in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation, against a generally political background, which was not conducive to achieving an outcome that can serve as a basis to be built upon at next year's final session of the Commission's three-year cycle. That is why I would also like to express my appreciation to all delegations whose constructive cooperation made this year's results possible. The European Union is confident that in 2008 we can build successfully on this year's results.

Before the start of this year's session of the Commission, the EU stated its conviction that the ultimate aim was a substantial outcome at the end of the three-year cycle of the Commission, but that, if we were to reach that aim, the first objective for this year must be to engage in substantive debates. I think we can say that that goal was achieved. We had difficult but substantive debates, which have brought us closer to a successful session next year. We hope that the results that we have all achieved will serve as an encouragement for the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which will begin next week in Vienna.

Finally, let me thank the three Chairpersons once again for their work and compliment them on the outcome of our conference. I am looking forward to seeing them next week in Vienna or in the First Committee in New York.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We have concluded three weeks of intense work. The Disarmament Commission has shown that it continues to be a useful body within the disarmament machinery, which we all have the responsibility to preserve. We had debates, which are of great value in and of themselves. Occasionally, the discussions were intense, including many of the discussions on the issue of procedure — particularly in Working Group I — which, Cuba believes, could have been avoided. But what is important is that, in general, a serious and very professional exchange of views prevailed.

Can we be fully satisfied with the results of this session? Of course not. Cuba regrets that we were not able to make more progress, particularly in formulating concrete recommendations aimed at making progress in achieving nuclear disarmament.

Once again, we note with concern that not all States possess the political will that is needed to achieve genuine progress towards that objective.

For Cuba, nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons remain the most urgent and highest priority in the disarmament sphere. That is why we are not prepared to be satisfied with empty documents devoid of commitments and concrete recommendations on nuclear disarmament. During this session, the Non-Aligned Movement submitted a very broad and detailed working document setting out principles and concrete recommendations aimed at making progress towards nuclear disarmament. That was further confirmation of the high priority that the

Movement attaches to that objective — a priority that Cuba fully shares.

We believe that Working Group II, on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, succeeded in creating conditions that could facilitate the adoption of a consensus document next year. In our view, the Group's efforts in 2008 must focus essentially on the path to be followed in the future. It is Cuba's view that the most recent revision of the working document submitted by the Chair of Working Group II should be the basis for continued deliberations next year. That text appropriately reflects the state of affairs, including on outstanding issues.

Let me conclude, Mr. Chairman, by congratulating you, the other members of the Bureau and the Secretariat staff for your excellent work. In particular, we recognize the considerable endeavours of the Chairmen of the two Working Groups, who gave their all to carry out their difficult tasks.

Mr. Pardeshi (India): My delegation would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your very skilful conduct of this year's session of the Disarmament Commission. We would like to commend the Chairmen of the two Working Groups, as well as all the other members of the Bureau and the Secretariat staff, for their dedication to the work of the Commission.

In Working Group I, delegations, including ours, presented several working papers and conference room papers. The Chairman, with the aim of guiding our deliberations, presented papers, including his working paper of 25 April. The latter is a short document which will require substantial elaboration, adjustment and improvement in order to formulate global and non-discriminatory principles and universally applicable recommendations for achieving the objective of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament in a balanced and comprehensive manner. My delegation has remained engaged in discussions, presenting suggestions for improvements in the text, and it will continue to do so constructively during the intersessional period and during the 2008 session. When we resume next year, we will have before us a collection of good working papers and conference room papers to work on. I might also add that an improved atmosphere of mutual trust, accommodation, understanding and transparency will help very much in making further progress in the work of the Working Group.

My delegation shares the assessment of the Chairman of Working Group II that the fifth revised version of his non-paper actually reflects the latest state of affairs in the substantive discussions. Our delegation is prepared to work on the basis of his revised non-paper so that we can make good progress next year and arrive at an agreement on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

Mr. Apolinar Espinal (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, which wishes to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your efforts in leading this session of the Disarmament Commission. Our thanks go also to the Chairmen of the two Working Groups for their efforts. We hope that we will be able next year to achieve concrete results on the issues under discussion.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): As this session comes to a close, I wish to express my gratitude to all members for their participation and their work in both plenary and Working Group meetings. I thank, in particular, my colleagues in the Bureau, who constantly helped me guide the work of the Commission. We met often and exchanged many views, thus facilitating the work of the entire membership.

I wish also to thank all members of the Commission secretariat; it would take a great deal of time to name them all. All its members have done excellent work and have provided great and discreet support as they guided me, the other officers and the general membership. My thanks go to the secretariats of the Working Groups and the staff of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Office for Disarmament Affairs, as well as to the interpreters — who do combat with each of our statements, word by word — the documents officers and the conference officers. I thank them all.

Closure of the session

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I declare closed the 2007 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.